

HYDROPHOBIA.

The Queer Antics of a Lot of Chickens That Were Bitten by a Mad Dog.

Farmer Barker is a great lover of animals, says *The Philadelphia News*, and in addition to the bob-tailed quadruped that helps to drag an antiquated plowshare in summer and a bob-sled in winter, he is the owner of two goats, a cow, three black-and-tan terriers, a gaunt hound whose pedigree is not much longer than his abbreviated tail. This hound has since puppyhood been addicted to wandering about the surrounding country, and his reputation for peaceable behavior toward sheep has always been bad. On the fifteenth of last month the dog was chased out of Haine's potato patch on the plank road, and it was observed then that the animal was frothing at the mouth and snapping, not only at passers-by, but at every obstacle in its path.

Nothing particular was thought of this at the time, but on the day following the dog dashed into Barker's back yard with bloodshot eyes, foamed flecked jowls, and a howl that could be heard for a quarter of a mile. Old man Barker picked up a stake and tried to drive the animal into its kennel, but the beast refused to obey, and ran wildly around the yard in a circle until it fell exhausted against the paling fence. Mr. Barker is not a particularly well-read man, but he surmised that the dog was mad, and he so informed his wife, two grown sons, and a couple of small children. As a consequence the house was instantly barricaded and a council of war held. It was decided that the best thing to do would be to shoot the dog with an old army musket that had lain in the garret since the capture of Richmond. By the time the gun had been brought down stairs, oiled, and loaded, the maddened animal had recovered, and was dashing blindly around the yard again.

A window was lifted, aim was taken, and the trigger pulled. There was a terrific explosion, and one of the Barker boys was thrown on his back. A great squawking in the chicken coop followed the firing of the musket, and twenty or thirty of the frightened birds flew over the fence.

The dog did not appear to notice them, but kept galloping on, snapping at everything within reach. The chickens could not get out of his way, and at least half a dozen of them were killed within five minutes. The rest were mangled badly, but as the dog's second paroxysm ended in another fit of exhaustion, they had a chance to huddle together long enough to permit one of the Barker boys to come out of the house and club the mad dog to death.

The Barker family being very matter-of-fact people, there was not much sentiment wasted either upon the dead hound or the dead chickens. The latter was plucked, drawn, and made into chicken pot-pie, and the former was buried at the foot of a grapevine. The injured chickens were driven back to their coop, and the Barker family retired to bed without any other thought than chicken for breakfast. In a week the whole thing was forgotten, and would probably never have been thought of again had not a most remarkable phenomenon occurred.

About five o'clock last Saturday afternoon there was a great commotion in the chicken-yard. Two gray pullets were discovered flying blindly about, upsetting meal-pans, water-troughs, and playing old scratch generally. Very little attention was paid to this at first, but it kept up so long that Mrs. Barker went to see if a fox had gotten into the coop. No fox was found, but the two pullets had been reinforced by a matronly yellow hen and three half-grown cocks. All of them were squaking and flying and running about the yard like mad. Mrs. Barker called for her boys, and they came from the house to enjoy the singular spectacle. By that time every chicken in the yard was in a most remarkable state of excitement. Some were lying on their backs flapping their wings; others were fighting imaginary foes, and others again were seemingly bent on dashing out their brains against the fence. After awhile all the chickens, except two of the cocks and one of the gray pullets, quieted down. These excited fowls continued to roll about in the sand and give utterance to the most unchickenlike cries. Their

mouths were wide open, like chickens with the pip, and their antics were so unnatural as to cause great merriment. This was kept up all Saturday afternoon, and became noised about the neighborhood. Old Teddy Brown drove all the way up from Frogtown, and on his way back stopped to tell Dr. E. F. Shriver, who visited the house on Sunday morning, and after a careful examination gravely announced that the chickens were suffering from hydrophobia. Although this was scouted by physicians generally, Dr. Shriver was positive that his diagnosis was correct. A draught of air started the peculiar antics, and the fowls refused to drink water. The strange behavior continued all day Sunday, and on Monday a number of persons visited the farm and were promptly charged 10 cents to see the chickens dance.

A prominent physician was asked this morning by a reporter whether such a disease could exist in chickens. The doctor laughed. "No," said he, "Hydrophobia could not exist in a granivorous animal. It is a malady peculiar to omnivorous animals and affects the carnivora proper more than any other species. I can not imagine what ails those chickens at Barker's. I saw them yesterday, and I must confess that I never was more astonished or amused in my life."

About Comets.

Aristotle's idea about comets was that they were exhalations of foul air from the earth's surface, which having ascended into space could not get beyond the moon, and eventually, when the mass became large enough, it took fire and was consumed.

The idea was accepted by the ancients that they were the souls of great men on their way to Heaven. The comet which appeared in 43 B. C. was supposed to be the son of Julius Caesar.

Science investigation has shown that the theory of malignant influence will not stand the test, and statistics prove that as many catastrophes occur in periods when there is no comet as in other periods when they have been present.

There have been 600 comets recorded since the beginning of the Christian era, those antedating the telescope being such only as were visible to the naked eye. From three to six comets are usually discovered each year.

The bright or large comets do not appear with equal frequency in periods of centuries. In the sixteenth century there were twenty-three such; in the seventeenth twelve; in the eighteenth six; in the nineteenth, thus far, twenty; so that this century has a fair prospect of rivaling the sixteenth century.

It is known that the earth has on more than one occasion passed through the tail of a comet, but it was not known until after the event and no effect noticeable was produced in the passage. The nucleus of the largest comets is not more than .00001 of the diameter of the earth.—*Prof. C. A. Young.*

"What is Marriage?"

Is the startling headline in an exchange, and to which a writer replies:

We have never been married, but we have listened to our married friends tell their experience, which is just as good. As a grammatical proposition "marriage" is a plural number in the present tense—sometimes intensely present—and it takes two persons of opposite sexes to form the number. For about fifteen months after the bridal day, marriage resembles a high-stepping pair of boots traveling on sidewalks made of gold and precious stones. After that period it is full of wood piles, kitchen stoves, cold mornings, syrup of squills, red flannels and pins that cannot possibly stick anybody. Marriage is a state in which nothing is taken for granted and in which morning wrappers and untied shoes abound. It is a state in which a fellow always imagines he married the wrong girl and that all the girls in town save his wife feel sorry for him. A man should never be married until he has arrived at the years of discretion, and he must always permit his lady-love's mamma to judge when he has reached such a state of years. Marriage is also that state where the wife threatens to go home to her mother every twenty-four hours, and the husband devoutly hopes she will.—*National Weekly.*

Didn't Want It.

She was a sour-faced, thin-voiced woman, with an exasperating manner about her that made salesmen dive under the counter when they saw her coming. She had been traveling Chestnut and Market streets all day long looking for a baby coach. And such a coach! It must have all the latest improvements, besides a lot of other improvements that had never been invented, much less heard of. A patent brake was indispensable, as well as an automatic fan to keep the flies from baby's face. Then she wanted a contrivance to start the coach, another one to lift it over the gutters, another to stop it and a top that would spread out automatically on sunny days.

After distracting two obliging young men until their collars wilted, the amiable mother founced out of a big establishment on Chestnut street, and took an Eighth-street car for Girard avenue, "because," she condescended to explain, "there's a factory up there where they make such things, and are not numskulls like you."

She found the proprietor of the place a bland young man, with a solemn face and a stock of trade whoppers on hand that would astonish a side-showman.

"We'll have to make it to order, madam," he said, washing his hands in the air, "and while we're about it we might as well add the Jones soother."

"What's that?" asked the woman who was hunting ingenious baby-coaches.

"An arrangement to pat the baby on the back every time it cries," was the reply. "You simply press a button, and it coddles baby so naturally that the little darling can't tell the difference between the 'pattie' and its own mother. At the same time a speaking-tube, placed alongside of the kid's ear, begins to say 'Waz ze masser,' or 'Goey seep, pet,' whichever you may prefer. A nursing-bottle pops out of a pocket in the side of the coach, adjusts itself in baby's mouth, and a metal finger tucks down the bib, while a wooden finger tickles it on the knee. Only ten dollars extra ma'am, and if you—"

"I think you are trying to make fun of me, sir!" exclaimed the woman, indignantly. "I never heard of such nonsense. I don't want any of your coaches."

"Yes'm," replied the salesman, as the lady founced out. "All right, 'm! I was about to say that we had a spanking attachment that has been indorsed by—" but the amiable mother was out of hearing and making her way as rapidly as possible for a Fourth street car before the sentence was finished.—*Philadelphia News.*

Story of the Report.

One day
A newspaper man was heard to say,
"There's a Washington wedding not far away."
And then,
When
They figured down all the marrying men,
And sifted them over and tried again,
And could not find
A bachelor man that way inclined,
Suddenly each despondent,
Resident
Newspaper correspondent
Shouted: "The president!"
Then the brood
Of reporters
Eagerly issued
From their quarters
And interviewed
The republican court'ers.
In twenty-four hours, by some means or other,
They published a column about the girl's mother,
And two or three columns they got from her brother.
Some pardonable vaunts
From two of her aunts;
A chapter of rant
From an old maiden aunt;
And no end of buzzins
From dozens
Of cousins;
Her teacher,
Her preacher,
Her sisters at home,
Her schoolmate, sweet creature,
Her uncle in Rome;
Her cousin in Leander,
Her brother-in-law,
Her uncle Lysander,
Her great-grandpapa,
All manner of people she never thought well of,
And hundreds of others she never heard tell of,
Until all this great nation just knew all about it;
Save her and the president—they seemed to doubt it.
—*Burdette in Brooklyn Eagle.*

The man whose rule of life is policy never knows the glow or the glory of honest enthusiasm.

A RICH FAMILY.

The Value of the Astor Property in New York.

Looking out of my window last evening I saw the Astor brothers passing down Twenty-sixth street, writes a New York correspondent of *The Philadelphia Times*. They were coming from their business office just below Broadway, on the street they were traversing. Here they have quite a pretentious brick building, which looks like a banking house. It is fitted up like one. On the inside it has all the paraphernalia of screens, desks, big books, and clerks which are so common in financial establishments. On the outside of the door there are two brass signs, one bearing the name of John J. Astor, the other William W. Astor. On the inside each of the brothers has a private office and plenty of clerks to do the work. This place is a singular little institution. It wears an air of repose entirely foreign to a business establishment yet within its walls there are more transactions of importance yearly than in many a pretentious financial institution. The score or more of clerks with their big books are kept busy looking after the real estate which belongs to the Astors. It is said that this establishment collects in rentals more than a million of dollars a year. It takes as much time and attention to keep track of the property belonging to this noted family as it would to conduct an extensive banking house.

The Astors are not speculators. They do not go upon the street for business or invest money in ordinary business affairs. They confine their operations to real estate. It was the foundation of their great fortune which was left to them by the shrewd and miserly old parent who made it. John Jacob Astor, the elder, was a singular old person. He labored and saved; all the money he accumulated went into land and its belongings. The most glowing business venture could not coax money out of his pocket. He believed in land and invested his fortune in it. His life was anything but a happy one, and his family do not seem to have improved much upon it. They live in good shape; that is about all. They cut no figure in the general life of the metropolis except as large property owners and purchasers. The two Astors are old men. William W. is a tall, robust citizen, near 60, I should think. He has a round, full face, a little inclined to be red, and a sandy complexion. His brother is fully as tall, but not as stout nor as cheerful looking. Both of them pass along the street without attracting any attention or scarcely a passing notice.

In dollars and cents I suppose they are by far the largest real-estate owners in the United States. They are adding to their possessions every day. Their present ventures, I believe, are in the direction of the new property about Harlem that is just now attracting so much attention. Next to the Vanderbilts I suppose this is the richest family in America. How many millions they have no one seems to know, yet in 1860 it was heralded over the United States that John Jacob Astor was the richest man in the country. He had a million dollars then. Just think of the great fortunes that have been accumulated since. The Vanderbilt estate is one of these; while old Astor's investments, once thought to be worth a million, must by this time have grown to a hundred millions. The fortune he left to his family is one of the very few in New York that has been kept intact and built upon by the increase in the value of houses and lands.

The bleak, craggy mountain Tacamo, in Chiapas, Mexico, has been covered with clouds for nearly two weeks, and at intervals a subterranean rumbling has been heard, and earthquakes have been felt. As it is thought to be a sleeping volcano, though it has not awakened within the memory of man, the people are very much alarmed.

A 3-year-old youngster near Appomattox, Dakota, was lost, and after a search of twenty-four hours was found near his home in a badger's hole, into which he had slipped feet foremost, and which was deep enough to quite conceal him.